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SOURCE Vneshnyaya Torgovlya.SOVIET WRITERS ON THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF SYRIA AND LEBANON

The following article discussing the economic status and foreign trade of Syria and Lebanon, from the Soviet periodical Vneshnyaya Torgovlya, was written by I. Petrov and A. Nikolayeva.

Syria and Lebanon, two small Arab countries, have for a long time been the object of a violent struggle between the large imperialist states -- Britain, France and, during the last decade, the US.

After World War II, this struggle became greatly intensified, especially between the US and Britain. Each of these two imperialist plunderers is striving to subject the economy, the natural resources, and the markets of Syria and Lebanon to its undivided domination. With the aid of its agents in Arab countries, Britain is striving to unite Syria with Iraq and Jordan in order to extend to Syria the British occupation regime now existing in Jordan and Iraq. The US is striving to accomplish its imperialist plans by enforcing loans and agreements of bondage, and by obtaining concessions for the exploitation of the mineral wealth of Syria and Lebanon.

The struggle of Britain and the US for domination in Syria and Lebanon serves as a brilliant illustration of the irreconcilable contradictions between British and US capital monopolies. In their struggle for domination in these countries, US and British imperialists are completely unscrupulous. During the past 3 years Syria has had four military coups d'etat, which were engineered alternately by agents of British and US capital. Evidence of the intensification of the Anglo-American struggle is the frequent change of cabinets which has taken place recently in Lebanon, and the military coup d'etat carried out there in September 1952. Despite the resistance of British monopolies, the US Tapline (Transarabian Pipeline) Company in 1947 obtained from the Lebanese government, and in 1949 from the Syrian government, grants of concessions to lay a petroleum pipeline across the territory of these countries. In 1950, the petroleum pipeline, which terminates at the Lebanese port of Sidon, was put in service. Its handling capacity is 15 million tons of petroleum per year. In mid-1951, the Lebanese government, under pressure from the US Standard Oil group, granted a concession for petroleum prospecting to the Chicago Airien Company. The US petroleum company Aramco is carrying on negotiations with the Lebanese government for the construction of a petroleum refinery with a capacity of 650,000 tons of petroleum products yearly, in the region of Sidon.

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The economies of Syria and Lebanon are being penetrated not only by petroleum, but also by other US monopolies. According to a report in the Beirut newspaper Nida al-Watan, General Motors is planning to build automobile plants in Lebanon.

On 29 May 1951, the US concluded an agreement with Lebanon concerning "aid" within the limits of Truman's notorious Point-Four Program. In conformity with this agreement, a large number of American "advisers" and "experts" have arrived in Lebanon with the aim of "inspecting" the economy of Lebanon; at the same time, they are searching out profitable objects for US capital investments. According to a report in the newspaper Al-Khaleel [Approximation from Russian], the number of Americans in Lebanon at present exceeds 4,000.

Syria refused to sign the agreement with the US concerning "technical aid," giving as a justification for the refusal the insignificance of the sum earmarked by the US as "technical aid" to her. At present, negotiations are being conducted with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which is controlled by the US, concerning the granting of a 25-million-dollar loan to Syria. This is evidence of the fact that US imperialism, if it cannot force its "aid" on Syria directly, is nonetheless attempting to do so in a roundabout way, and thereby to strengthen still more its position in this country.

The consequences of the domination of foreign capitalists, local bourgeoisie, and landowners have a telling effect on all aspects of the political and economic life of Syria and Lebanon. The economy of these countries is of a typical colonial character. The basis of their economy is agriculture, in which the remnants of feudalism are still strong, especially in Syria. Several hundred Syrians, large landowners, possess 75 percent of all the lands, while 200,000 peasant families, two thirds of the total number of families, have no land. The peasants are subjected to severe exploitation. Landless peasants are forced to lease land under conditions of servitude or to work as farm hands for the landowners. About one third of all peasants possess insignificant plots of land and are forced to work a part of the time on the fields of the large landowners. The tenant peasant is forced to hand over three fourths of the harvest to the landowner, if the latter gives him seeds and draft animals, or 40 to 50 percent of the harvest if the tenant uses his own seeds and animals. Payment of interest on loans from the landowner still further reduces the meager share of the harvest that falls to the peasant.

Large landowners care little about improving their lands. Their chief occupation is usury. Obtaining loans from the Land Credit Bank, with interest at 9 to 10 percent annually, the landowners use this money to make loans to peasants at monstrously high rates of interest.

As a result of extreme poverty, Syrian peasants are unable to buy even the essentials of life. The Lebanese magazine Moyen Orient in May 1950 wrote that "feudalism has left its sinister mark on the Syrian village. It has converted it into a focal point of ignorance, disease, cultural backwardness, and oppression."

A vivid illustration of conditions in the Syrian village is provided in the figures on the distribution of the national income in 1950, published by the Beirut newspaper Le Commerce du Levant on 7 February 1951. Of the total national income of 1,250,000,000 Syrian pounds (one Syrian pound equals one Lebanese pound, or one ruble 23 kopeks), the income of several hundred landowners and large merchants amounted to 553 million Syrian pounds, or 44 percent of the total national income, while the income of more than 2 million peasants amounted to a total of 64 million Syrian pounds, or 5 percent of the total national income. If, however, the stratification of the Syrian village is taken into consideration (30,000 prosperous families, or less than 10 percent of the total number of peasant families, possess an average of 60 hectares of land each), then the contrast will be even more striking.

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At the end of 1951, the Syrian government published a decree containing a half-hearted decision concerning "the limiting of absentee landholding and the surrender of state lands for lease." In conformity with this decree, a 150-hectare maximum for land plots has been established in the regions of Al-Jazirah, the Euphrates, and Sahrawi, and a 50 hectare maximum in other regions of Syria. However, there is as yet no information which would affirm that the Syrian government intends to take measures to put this decree into effect.

The level of land utilization in Syria and Lebanon is very low. According to information of official statisticians, of 5.9 million hectares of land in Syria suitable for cultivation, only 2.5 million hectares are utilized. The land is cultivated with primitive tools. Mineral fertilizers are used in insignificant quantities. On the larger part of the territory of Syria and Lebanon, agriculture is possible only by artificial irrigation. Nonetheless, the irrigation system in these countries is completely undeveloped. Plans for irrigation installations, worked out by the Syrian and Lebanese governments, remain on paper.

The production of grain crops is predominant in Syrian agriculture because of the significant role of pasture livestock, while the raising of vegetables is of great importance in the agriculture of Lebanon. The basic grain crops of Syria and Lebanon are wheat and barley. Other crops are millet, maize, lentils, peas, and beans. The most important industrial crops are cotton and tobacco.

Syria satisfies her needs for bread grains chiefly through domestic production and in harvest years has a surplus for export. In 1951, as a result of the sharp increase in cotton acreage at the expense of wheat acreage, and also as a result of the drought, the wheat harvest was below that of 1950. The gross harvest of wheat and barley in 1951 was 904,000 tons, as compared with 1,187,000 tons in 1950. The production of wheat in Lebanon satisfies only one third of the country's needs. About 50,000 tons of wheat are produced yearly, and more than 100,000 tons are imported yearly, chiefly from Syria.

In 1950, as a result of the increased demand for cotton on the foreign market, acreage devoted to cotton was doubled in Syria. The expansion of cotton planting continued in 1951, and quite frequently lands completely unsuitable for cotton growing were used. As a result of this, and also as a result of the severe drought and damage done by agricultural pests, the 1951 cotton harvest was only 12.7 percent more than that in 1950, although the acreage under cultivation in 1951 was almost double that of the preceding year. The domestic demand for cotton is fixed at approximately 10,000-12,000 tons a year. The remaining quantity is exported.

Area Under Cultivation and Gross Harvest of Cotton in Syria

	<u>Area Under Cultivation</u> <u>1,000 hectares</u>	<u>Gross Harvest</u> <u>1,000 tons</u>
1949	25	13.3
1950	78	35.5
1951	150	40.0

Industry in Syria and Lebanon is very poorly developed. Production is concentrated, for the most part, in industrial enterprises of a semi-cottage type. In Syria the basic industry is the textile industry, chiefly cotton. In the textile enterprises, which have 65,000 spindles and 15,000 looms (including 3,000 mechanical ones), 5,000 tons of thread and 5,000 to 6,000 tons of

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fabrics were produced in 1950. Of other branches of industry, the most widely developed are the food, leather, cement, match, glass, and soap. The industrial structure of Lebanon is almost the same as that of Syria. In 1950, the production of cotton thread in Lebanon was 1,000 tons, and 10 million tons of cotton fabrics were produced.

Industry in Syria and Lebanon is undergoing a serious crisis at present. It achieved a certain degree of development during the prewar years and especially during World War II due to the sharp curtailment of imports, but since the war the major portion of the industries in these countries (primarily the textile) have suffered severely from foreign competition.

A sufficient quantity of cotton fabrics and thread is produced in Syria and Lebanon to satisfy domestic demand completely, and to provide some for export. However, imports of cheap cotton fabrics seriously hamper the sale of locally produced fabrics on the domestic market. Foreign competition also hinders the sale of Syrian and Lebanese products in neighboring Arab countries. Unable to combat the expansion of US and British monopolies, the industry of Syria and Lebanon is forced to curtail production.

Unemployment in Syria and Lebanon has taken on catastrophic dimensions.

According to official and obviously conservative information, 15,900 of 68,600 registered workers did not have any work in January 1951. The number of unemployed had considerably increased by the end of 1951. According to the declaration of the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Sami as Sulh, the number of unemployed in Lebanon at the end of 1952 was 50,000 persons.

It must be noted that while branches of industry producing civilian goods are forced to curtail production or cease production completely, other branches of industry, which are used by the Americans for military purposes, are expanding production. In Lebanon, for example, the production of cement plants in 1951 almost doubled the 1937 output, and was 15 percent over the 1950 output.

The economy of Syria and Lebanon is actually under the complete control of foreign capital. Foreign investments of 882 million Lebanese pounds constitute 93 percent of all capital investments in Lebanon. The Beirut newspaper Le Commerce du Levant reported on 10 May 1952 that, according to Syria's Chief of State, General Silo, of the 3,500 companies and agencies located in Syria, only 50 belong to Syrians. On 15 February 1950, the Lebanese magazine Ash-Shark published an article entitled, "We Are Suffocating Under the Power of Foreign Companies." The author of the article characterized the economic position of Lebanon as follows: "All branches of the Lebanese economy are in the hands of foreign capital. The markets of Lebanon are open to any and all production of foreign imperialists, while the output of domestic industries cannot find a market and our workers are thrown out into the street."

The majority of foreign companies playing the master in Syria and Lebanon had received concessions as far back as the time of the French mandate, and under conditions antithetical to the national interests of these countries. "Concession payments made to the state by the majority of foreign concession companies in Lebanon are ridiculously meager," Le Commerce du Levant wrote on 26 April 1952. According to reports in the local press, the sole source of income for the Lebanese budget is taxes from the population. At the same time, foreign concession companies have not paid taxes in 7 years, in particular the income tax established in 1946.

Recently in Lebanon, protests were raised with greater frequency against the actions of a French company, Societe d'Electricite de Beirut, which at its own discretion raised the already-high electricity rates. Protests were also made

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against the actions of the Beirut Port Company and other companies monopolizing individual port services. These companies established excessively high rates for unloading and storing cargoes. On 23 January 1952, Le Commerce du Levant stated that rates for unloading in the Egyptian port of Alexandria were 85 to 450 Lebanese piastres per ton, while in Beirut they were 285 to 1,400 piastres per ton.

Great indignation was evoked especially by the concession agreements with US and British petroleum monopolies, in particular with the US Tapline Company.

The treaties of bondage which were forced on Syria and Lebanon by the petroleum companies guarantee US and British monopolists colossal profits, while only miserable crumbs are set aside for Syria and Lebanon. For example, in the 1950-1951 revenue statement for Lebanon, of the total revenue of 421 million Lebanese pounds, only one million Lebanese pounds, or 0.24 percent, represented revenues from the petroleum companies. The terms of the concession agreements gave the concessionaires the right to import any goods whatsoever into Syria and Lebanon duty free. This system is very injurious to the economy of these countries. Foreign companies, especially petroleum companies, are actually not fulfilling the obligations that they have pledged themselves to fulfill.

According to the terms of the concession agreement laying the petroleum pipeline across the territory of Syria and Lebanon, the Tapline Company agreed to give each of these countries 200,000 tons of crude petroleum yearly. The company has not fulfilled its obligation. At the end of 1952, the company's representative informed the governments of Syria and Lebanon that the company itself did not handle the petroleum and that therefore the petroleum deliveries could not be made. The Tapline Company, according to the terms of the agreement, was to select its service personnel from the native population, but it has failed to do so.

The petroleum companies are not reluctant to make various rash promises, such as the promise to "liquidate unemployment" in Syria and Lebanon. In regard to the question of the planned construction of a petroleum refinery in Sidon, Lebanon, by Aramco, where it was proposed that up to 60,000 Lebanese workers would be employed, the Beirut newspaper al-Balrak wrote: "Can it be that the very same thing has happened to these 60,000 workers that happened to the 80,000 Lebanese workers whom the Tapline Company promised to provide with work?" The Beirut newspaper al-Hadaf wrote on 17 February 1952: "What have we received from the Tapline Company during its 10 years activity in our country? What has it given us in exchange for its free use of our coastline and its monopoly of a considerable part of our land and ports, which it has converted into zones declared off limits to Lebanese? Instead of giving work to thousands, the Tapline Company has employed only several score Lebanese, and even these are only henchmen of big-time feudal lords and influential persons."

While striving to establish their domination over Syria and Lebanon, the imperialists are attempting to sow seeds of discord between these two states. One of these attempts was undertaken, for example, in 1950. Prior to 1950, Syria and Lebanon represented a single economic entity as a result of the economic union that existed between them. This union was based on a customs union, a single monetary system, common policy regarding internal trade, and interdependence in the sphere of supply. However, on 14 March 1950, chiefly as the result of intrigues of Anglo-American imperialists, who made full use of certain differences of opinion between Syria and Lebanon, the economic union between the two countries was dissolved, on the initiative of Syria. From that date, a customs boundary was established, different monetary systems were introduced, different systems of internal trade were established, and the nationals of these states were prohibited from freely crossing their common border. For almost 2 years, Syria and Lebanon have been, in the words of the Lebanese press, "in a state of cold war."

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The enforced rupture of the ethnic and economic bonds of the Lebanese and Syrian peoples has had an extremely negative influence on the economic life of Syria and Lebanon. The damage done to both countries by the dissolution of the economic union was so obvious that the governments of Syria and Lebanon were forced to sign a new economic agreement on 4 February 1952. This agreement contains the following basic provisions: The Syrian and Lebanese governments agreed to permit the exchange of local agricultural and industrial products; the majority of agricultural products and some industrial products were freed from duties and import-export licenses; duties on certain industrial finished goods were lowered; and import duties were established uniformly for both countries on foreign goods similar to agricultural and industrial products of Syria and Lebanon.

The agreement also envisaged the freeing of Iraqi livestock from import duties, the introduction of uniform internal taxes on sugar, and the settling of the question of the distribution of funds received from the Tapline Company.

The Syrian-Lebanese economic agreement of 4 February 1952 was characterized by the Lebanese press as not conforming completely to the interests of Lebanon. According to statements of Lebanese economists on this agreement, the winning side is Syria since almost all its exports to Lebanon have been freed of import duties, while goods imported to Lebanon from other countries are subject to increased import duties and will be unable to compete with similar Syrian goods.

Prior to 14 March 1950, customs statistics of Syria and Lebanon were united and it was not possible to judge the volume of internal trade of either country, or to judge at whose expense the tremendous liabilities on their foreign trade balance sheet were formed.

The trade of Syria and Lebanon from 14 March through 31 December 1950, that is, after the economic separation, and during 1951 was as follows: (in millions of Syrian or Lebanese pounds):

	<u>Syria</u>		<u>Lebanon</u>	
	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951</u>
Imports	197.9	305.1	244.8	320.8
Exports	207.9	277.1	70.5*	105.9*
Trade balance	+ 10.0	-28.0	-174.3	-214.9

*Export and re-export

Lebanon, whose population is about one third that of Syria, imported 5 percent more goods in 1951 than the latter; at the same time, Syria's exports surpassed Lebanon's by 2.6 times.

During the period 14 March - 31 December 1950, Syria had a small balance on the asset side of her trade balance sheet. In 1951, as a result of the curtailment of the export of grains and the simultaneous rise in imports, there was a liability of 28 million Syrian pounds in the Syrian balance of trade. During the same period, the liabilities of Lebanon's balance of trade were more than eight times those of Syria. From this, one may conclude that the deficit in the balance of trade of Syria and Lebanon was present even during preceding years, chiefly at Lebanon's expense.

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In 1951, the Lebanese statistical administration drew up an estimate of Lebanese expenditures for the year 1 April 1950 - 31 March 1951. Lebanese expenditures were fixed at 440 million Lebanese pounds, and revenues at 421 million. The basic revenue items were (in millions of Lebanese pounds): exports, 94; funds from Lebanese emigrants, 50; transit, 49; aid from abroad to refugees, 39; import of capital, 25; invisible export of gold, 30; tourist trade, 33; income from currency exchanges, 20; payments from petroleum companies, 1; income from Lebanese holdings abroad, 5; and expenses of diplomatic corps and foreign delegations in Lebanon, 8 (Le Commerce du Levant, 26 December 1951).

The trade of Syria and Lebanon clearly reflects the agrarian character of their economy. Their exports consist basically of agricultural products, raw materials, and foods; while their imports consist basically of finished industrial goods.

Syrian Exports in 1950 and 1951
(quantity in 1,000 tons, value in millions of Syrian pounds)

	<u>14 Mar - 31 Dec 1950</u>		<u>1951</u>	
	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Value</u>
Total	—	207.9	—	277.1
Textile raw materials and finished goods	24.4	102.2	35.8	190.0
Products of vegetable origin	388.8	78.1	115.6	28.7

Other Syrian exports include livestock and animal products, food industry products, leather and leather goods. Various grains form the greatest portion of the group of products of vegetable origin.

The most important items of Syrian export are cotton, wool, grains, and livestock; cotton has occupied first place since 1950. In that year, 15,000 tons of cotton were exported; in 1951, the figure was 23,000 tons. The considerable curtailment in the export of products of vegetable origin was caused by a sharp reduction in the export of grains. This was a result of the poor harvest in 1951, when the export of wheat and maize was prohibited after the middle of the year.

Syria also exports artificial silk and cotton fabrics, tobacco, industrial soap, goatskins and sheepskins, animal fats, apricot pulp, shawls, and scarves. The primary buyer of Syrian goods is Lebanon.

Syrian Imports in 1950 and 1951
(quantity in 1,000 tons, value in millions of Syrian pounds)

	<u>14 Mar - 31 Dec 1950</u>		<u>1951</u>	
	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Value</u>
Total	458.9	197.9	727.0	305.1
Textiles	21.3	57.5	17.0	64.4
Fuel	270.5	24.1	388.2	37.4

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	<u>14 Mar - 31 Dec 1950</u>		<u>1951</u>	
	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Value</u>
Machines and equipment	9.1	21.1	22.7	52.5
Metals and finished goods	34.3	13.4	49.3	22.5
Valuable stones and precious metals	—	11.5	—	12.8
Products of vegetable origin	41.1	10.6	130.0	30.6
Chemical and pharmaceutical goods	10.1	9.3	17.9	15.8
Food products	20.1	8.6	29.7	12.1
Transportation equipment	3.7	7.5	6.2	13.1

The major items of Syrian import in 1951 were thus textiles (21.1 percent of the total value of imports), machines and equipment (17.2 percent), fuel (12.2 percent), and products of vegetable origin (10 percent) (International Financial News Survey, 4 July 1952). The textile import of greatest value was artificial silk thread for the local textile industry. Syria also imports large quantities of cheap cotton fabrics and second-hand clothing and underwear. In 1951, imports of products of vegetable origin increased considerably, since Syria was forced to import 50,000 tons of wheat from Turkey as a result of the bad harvest. Syria also imports lumber, rubber, leather articles, and paper.

From Lebanon's customs statistics, it is difficult to establish the export volume of goods of local origin, inasmuch as the export statistics include goods which actually are re-exports. Among Lebanese export goods, only vegetables, tobacco, and fruits, i.e., citrus fruits, bananas, apples, and pears, can be included.

The make-up of Lebanese imports is similar to that of Syrian imports, except that agricultural products occupy a much greater portion of the former. In 1951, Lebanese imports from Syria amounted to 58.9 Lebanese pounds. Chief items of import were livestock, animal fats, cotton and cotton seed, wool, and grains.

The infiltration of US monopolies into the countries of the Near East, which was intensified after World War II, appears also in the internal trade of Syria and Lebanon. In the prewar period, the US share in the imports of these countries did not exceed 6-7 percent, but in 1951 Lebanese and Syrian imports from the US amounted to 17.8 and 18.1 percent, respectively, of total imports. The US occupied first place in both Lebanese and Syrian imports (without taking into consideration the goods turnover between Syria and Lebanon). Britain and France, who formerly occupied first place, in the trade of these countries, were pushed into the background.

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Syrian and Lebanese Imports in 1951, by Country
(In millions of Syrian or Lebanese pounds)

	<u>Syria</u>		<u>Lebanon</u>	
	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Total	305.1	—	320.8	—
US	55.5	18.1	57.0	17.8
Britain	38.9	12.7	30.8	9.7
France	31.6	10.3	38.3	11.9
Lebanon	31.4	10.3	—	—
Syria	—	—	58.9	18.4
Italy	21.2	6.9	10.5	3.4
West Germany	17.0	5.6	8.1	2.5
Turkey	16.1	5.3	6.5	2.1
Iraq	12.8	4.2	23.7	7.4
Belgium	9.3	3.0	8.9	2.8

It can be seen from above table that the US, Britain, and France together account for 41.1 percent of Syrian imports and 39.4 percent of Lebanese imports.

According to information from US statistics, exports from US to Syria in the last 3 years have increased more than 100 percent, as compared with each preceding year (without taking the rise of prices into consideration); for example, in 1949 US exports to Syria came to 4.9 million dollars; in 1950, to 10 million dollars; and in 1951, to 21.7 million dollars. The major US export to Syria are textiles and light trucks, which accounted for 57 percent of the total export value.

US exports to Lebanon are similar, but, in addition to textiles and trucks, one of the basic export items is foodstuffs, chiefly grain and flour. US, British, and French monopolies also import into Lebanon a large number of luxury goods. The chief US import from these countries is wool.

Syrian and Lebanese Exports in 1951, by Country
(In millions of Syrian or Lebanese pounds)

	<u>Syria</u>		<u>Lebanon</u>	
	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Total	277.1	—	97.7	—
Syria	—	—	22.0	22.5
Lebanon	59.4	21.4	—	—
France	50.3	18.1	3.4	3.6

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	<u>Syria</u>		<u>Lebanon</u>	
	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
US	37.4	13.5	22.7	23.3
Britain	19.5	7.0	2.6	2.6
Italy	14.5	5.2	4.4	4.5
Iraq	20.2	7.3	2.6	2.6
Free zone of port of Beirut	22.8	8.2	--	--
Jordan	12.3	4.4	3.6	3.7

In the trade between Syria and Lebanon, on the one hand, and the US, Britain, and France, on the other, imports predominate over exports, causing large deficits on Syrian and Lebanese trade balance sheets. These deficits amounted, in Syrian trade with the US and Britain, to 10.1 and 19.4 million Syrian pounds, respectively, and in Lebanese trade with the US, Britain, and France, to 34.3, 28.2, and 34.9 million Lebanese pounds, respectively, in 1951. Syrian trade with France was an exception, for in 1951 Syria's exports to France were valued at 18.7 million Syrian pounds more than its imports from France.

Syria introduced a strict system of licensing imports and exports from the moment of the dissolution of its economic union with Lebanon, and has maintained this policy to the present day.

On 1 August 1951, the Beirut newspaper *Le Commerce du Levant* reported: "The Ministry of National Economy of Syria adopted a decree requiring a license for the exportation of cotton, wool, malt root, lentils, apricot pulp, vetch, onions, cotton-seed, intestines, tanned goatskins and sheepskins, kidney beans, beans, bran, cotton-seed cakes, and sesame. The exportation of these goods must be effected through the port of Latakia." On 23 January 1952, the above newspaper published the text of a decree which regulated all imports into Syria by a system of import licenses issued by the Ministry of National Economy. On 21 April 1952, decrees were issued in Syria which introduced strict currency control.

As contrasted with Syria, the system of internal trade in Lebanon is characterized by complete freedom of export and import. *Le Commerce du Levant* of 30 January 1952 published a decree which abolished the last currency limitation in force in Lebanon, namely, the obligation of exporters to give the currency bureau 10 percent of the currency which they received.

In recent years, Syria and Lebanon have been following a policy of concluding bilateral trade agreements. In 1950-1952 Lebanon concluded such agreements with Iraq, Egypt, West Germany, Italy, and Czechoslovakia, while Syria concluded agreements with Iraq, West Germany, Saudi Arabia, and India.

The rampant nature of foreign monopolies and imperialist oppression are increasingly provoking the indignation of the peoples of Syria and Lebanon. In these countries, just as in many other semi-colonies and colonies, a national liberation movement is growing and expanding. Syrian and Lebanese workers are demanding more and more insistently that foreign monopolists and agents of imperialist states be driven out of their countries. They are demanding that bondage agreements with US and British petroleum companies be declared null and void, and that

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pro-US policies be denounced, since they lead to an intensification of economic and political oppression, to an increase in unemployment, and to the further worsening of the living conditions of the largest segment of the population.

Against the onrush of the masses of the people, the governments of Syria and Lebanon and certain foreign companies were forced to change the line of their conduct somewhat. This, however, was for the sole purpose of forestalling the growth of a liberation struggle. For example, the Syrian government nationalized the tobacco monopoly which formerly had belonged to the French company Regie de Tabac, and began negotiations with another French company concerning the purchase from it of the Damascus-Hama railroad line. The Tapline and Iraq Petroleum companies taking into consideration the recent events in Iran and the growth of the anti-imperialist movement in Syria and Lebanon, agreed to review certain provisions of the concession agreements.

However, neither the weak, halfway measures of the Syrian and Lebanese governments against foreign companies, nor the feigned complacency of US and British petroleum monopolies can deceive the peoples of Syria and Lebanon. The workers of these countries do not want to reconcile themselves to the plundering of their national wealth by US, British, and French imperialists; they do not want a continuation of the antinational policy of the present-day rulers; rather, they are firmly resolved to achieve the complete political and economic independence of their countries.

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